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The EXAMINER.

From Friday *December* 26, to Monday *December* 29, 1712.

Ἀλλά τίη ἔριδας καὶ νείκεα νωϊν ἀνάγκη
Νεικεῖν ἀλλήλοισιν ἐναντίον, ὥς τε γυναῖκας,
Αἵτε χολωσάμεναι ἔριδι πρὶ δημοδόκοιο
Νεικεῦσ' ἀλλήλῃσι, μέσην εἰς ἀγυιὰν ἰοῦσαι,
Πολλ' ἐπὶ τοῖς καὶ οὐκί. Homer.

THERE is a Train of Damſels about Town, whoſe preſent Circumſtances I have often conſider'd and bewail'd, as very deplorable. They are a ſort of amphibious *Sea-Nymphs* employ'd in our Fiſheries; who with proper Notices, and a very harmonious Accent, invite us every Evening to partake of that daily Tribute which the Sea pays us, in a ſavory and prolifick Collation of *Oyſters*. The Vociferations neceſſary to qualifie a *Naid* of this Order, and the ſaline Particles which ariſe from their Calling and Buſineſs, diſpoſe them to be very great Adventurers in Controverſie; and as Salt is an Emblem of Wit, to be very ſevere and ſatyrical. Theſe Accompliſhments render them the Envy of their Neighbours. Hence ſeveral Attempts have been made againſt the Fundamentals of their Order. An adjacent State did of late make more than one Encroachment upon their Fiſh, as a very deſirable part of their *Barrier*; whilſt, in concert with theſe Allies, an unreaſonable Faction here at home, ſeiz'd all their Tropes and Figures; ſo that by theſe violent Uſurpations, they are left wholly Naked and Deſtitute.

As *Comedy* took its Riſe from the Cart, the *Art of Calling Names* came by Water-Carriage, and is in Modern Phraſe, ſtiled *Billingſgate*, from the Name of the Port where it firſt Landed, and for ſome time lay at Anchor. The beſt Criticks have obſerv'd, that the Invention of Printing has not made any Improvements in this Art: It was certainly at the height whilſt it flouriſh'd in its Oral and Traditional State; and by being convey'd to us from the Preſs, loſes much of its Primitive Perfection, particularly in the Beauties of Elocution and Pronunciation. And yet nothing is wanting to refine it as much as poſſible; for which end there is a Claſs of Profeſſors now among us, who have made it the common Vehicle of the Liberal Sciences, and in which they tranſmit to us all Humane and Divine Learning.

The Deſign of *Panegyrick* being to *Raiſe* and Elevate, *Billingſgate*, which is its Oppoſite, ſhould, according to the Opinion and Judgment of ſome Criticks, employ it ſelf wholly in *Leſſening* and Depreſſing: But this is a Vulgar Miſtake; for, to ſpeak properly, 'tis rather a *Levelling* than a *Leſſening* Art; becauſe the Adept and his Subject, that is, the Perſon of whom he ſpeaks or treats, always ſink together: It being an eſtabliſh'd Rule here, that whatever Name is given to another, naturally returns to the Donor, according to a known Maxim, *Opprobrium eſt in dante*. Now ſo far as it Levels or Introduces a State of Equality, it is certainly a *Republican* Principle, and as ſuch took its Riſe and flouriſh'd heretofore in *Greece*. The *Cynicks*, who in all probability were the Inventors of this ſort of Literature, made a Monopoly of it, and for ſome time wholly ingroſs'd it to themſelves. There is an admirable *Dialogue* of this Kind in *Shakeſpear*, between *Timon* and *Apemantus*, two very great Maſters; for the Remains of theſe Philoſophers, are derived down to us by other Hands; and as the true Nature of this Art requires, chiefly in Fragments. *Diogenes*, as appears by the moſt authentick Memoirs, was in great Eſteem among them, and particularly Smart upon Crown'd Heads; which has render'd the Seat, in which he is ſaid to have kept his Reſidence, Sacred and Venerable; as a proper and ſignificative Receptacle for the moſt rigid Truths, and to which all the *Cynical* Profeſſors, the Followers of that Famous *Polemick*, have been admitted Tenants in Reverſion ever ſince.

All the other *Arts* and *Sciences* pay a particular Regard to this, as of ſingular Uſe and Value. *Morality* indeed, a dry Study, takes but little Notice of it; and yet that ſort of *Fortitude*, which the beſt *Ethical* Writers make to conſiſt *in ſuſtentando mala*, owes much of its Improvement, if not its very Eſſence, to *Billingſgate*. In *Logick* it ſeems to run through every *Chapter* and *Diviſion*: If you mark ſome of the moſt ſhining Lines with a *Note* of *Exclamation*, thus,

Barbara! Celarent! Darii! Ferio! Baralipton!

there will be no knowing whether ſuch a Sentence be a *Rule* in one Art, or an *Example* in t'other. In *Rhetorick*, *Tragedy*, *Comedy*, and all other Kinds of Poetry, where the Paſſions are either deſcribed or vented, it is never omitted, unleſs for want of a modiſh Genius in the Author. The *Law* gives it great Countenance, by Cuſtom and the Practice of the Courts. *Phyſicians* allow of ſtrong Exclamations, and the free Exerciſe of *Billingſgate* in moſt Caſes, eſpecially where the Diſtemper is *Cronical*. The neweſt *Divinity* admits of it; eſpecially in that Part which is called *The Application*. Nor is it of leſs uſe in modern *Hiſtory*, whenever the grand Rule is duly obſerv'd, *Of relating* Facts *for the ſake of* Characters.

Upon theſe Recommendations it is that a conſiderable Sect now in *Great Britain*, which for the future I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the Appellation of the *Nominals*, have with ſo much Encouragement and Succeſs introduc'd this vocal Art among us. It has indeed been objected, that the Doctrine of the *Nominals* is deliver'd in ſuch Terms as are notorious Signs of a bad Cauſe; but I do not ſee how this can poſſibly affect thoſe, who never yet diſcover'd the leaſt Inclination to be engag'd in a good one. It is ſufficient matter of Triumph for ſuch Proficients, that this Art effectually ſerves to make every Cauſe alike. I may venture to affirm, that as it is a more Compendious way of finiſhing a Controverſie than any other invented by *Ariſtotle*, and ſeems deſign'd to promote that great Ornament of Modern Learning, *Brevity*; ſo it never deſerts its Profeſſors; for when all other Topicks are exhauſted, this is their never-failing Refuge and laſt Reſort. Hence all Dumfoundings, and that obſolete Term in old Philoſophy, called a *Nonplus*, are of no uſe before a Maſter of this Science; who is upon all Subjects in ſo fair way to Conqueſt, that 'tis odds but his Antagoniſt, after a Word or two in the way of Reply (for this ſort of Logick conſiſts chiefly in ſingle Terms) is ſhamefully reduced to that wretched Abſurdity, the *Argumentum Baciſinum*, or *Repartee of the Cudgell*.

The *Nominals* value themſelves ſo very highly upon this Accompliſhment, that they will not ſuffer the *other* Sex to come up to them in any tolerable Degree of Emulation. But where an Author is happily Coupled with ſome *She-Philoſopher* of this Sect, it is no ſmall Advantage and Refreſhment to him, above what his Cotemporaries enjoy, to fill up here and there a *Sheet* from the oral Traditions of his own Family: And ſuch is the Ingenuity of the preſent Age, ſuch their Induſtry in encouraging uſeful Learning, that I am credibly inform'd there is a Parrot near *Thames-ſtreet*, who has been the Author of ſeveral late *Paragraphs* that have appear'd in Print, and which were faithfully Tranſcrib'd from his Mouth by an *Amanuenſis*.

This

This Art mightily improves the *Diction*; and abounds in rhetick Expreſſions, which may truly be ſaid to *Touch* and *Strike* the Reader. It introduces ſeveral ſtrong Metaphors into the Stile, and great Variety of thoſe *Paintings*, which are ſo frequently uſed in the *Sublime*. Every Line is a Treatiſe, and every Word a Sentence. I have ſeen thoſe, to whoſe Taſte ſome of theſe Beauties were adapted, ſo far tranſported with the peruſal of them, that they have been no longer *Readers* but *Actors*. *Billingſgate* renders the Language forcible and ſonorous: It gives a quick Turn to every Period, and makes it round and voluble. Swearing in common Converſation is neither half ſo Graceful nor ſo Innocent.

Homer found theſe Ornaments to be of more uſe to him than his *Expletives*; and has therefore put great Quantities of them into the Mouths of his principal Heroes and Generals. But I do not ſuſpect the Moderns of Copying from any ſuch antiquated Original: I preſume their Diſcoveries in this way, are aim'd at a much more noble End, the Information and Improvement of vulgar Capacities; in Condeſcenſion to which moſt of our *late Tracts*, eſpecially in Politicks, ſeem to have been written. Nor is the Candor of ſuch Authors leſs to be admir'd than their Judgment in the Choice of a free and open Stile; for whoever offers at Reaſoning upon a Subject that will not bear it, muſt of neceſſity be Obſcure and Unintelligible.

It would be a mighty Advancement of this Art, if inſtead of *Latin* Quotations, and other refreſhing Scraps from the *Greek* and *Roman* Claſſicks, which are now again the prevailing Mode, and ſerve to Interlard many a dry hungry Writer, the *Nominals* would ſometimes entertain us with an *Epiſode* or *Paragraph* in *Dutch*; a Language that is work'd up with great profuſeneſs of Conſonants, and all the Majeſty of Sound: For which reaſon *Billingſgate* ought to pay as great a Regard to it, as our *Opera's* do to *Italian*. This Dialect proves to be a great encourager of the moſt exorbitant Yawns, and is capable of filling the wideſt Stretch of an approv'd *Gaper*. It ſeems particularly calculated for the Uſe of theſe Philſophers, as the common Conveyance of all their Acts and Monuments in the way of modern *Satyr*: For as *French*, which is called the *Culinary Tongue*, or *Language of the Kitchin*, was invented for the gratifying of the Taſte, *Dutch* is no leſs ſucceſsful in turning the Stomach.

It may be I ſhall expoſe my ſelf to the Reſentment of the *Nominals*, by preſuming to give Directions in an Art, which I do not fully underſtand, and never deſign to Practiſe. Here I modeſtly own my Defects: But in this I proceed by a very good Rule,

Fungar vice Cotis, ——

and whenever the malicious World charges me with Grimace and an Air of *Stoiciſm*, as if I were inſenſible of the Pain that is inflicted by Cenſure, whilſt I recommend a Faculty by which I have been ſo very great a Sufferer; my Apology is ready drawn, and turns wholly upon thoſe popular Miſtakes, concerning the true Nature of an Irony, which have lately prevail'd in the World. The Reader is to know, that when I ſtand embelliſh'd and adorn'd with all the *hard Names* that are the uſual Produce of a Week, and have had the whole *Nomenclature* of the Sect exhauſted and empty'd upon me, I then appear to my ſelf in my beſt Equipage and higheſt Splendor. I loll at my eaſe, like a Beau in his new Chariot, with a ſcore or two of *gilt Devils* round him, and half a dozen *living Scoundrels* hanging behind. Every Trope and Figure that is beſtow'd on me, I take care to fill up with the addition of *Dear*, or ſome ſuch agreeable *Epithet*; and then the whole Addreſs is made not unlike that ſort of *Aigre-doux* Favours which the Ladies let drop to the happy Man, ſuch as *Dear Dog!* or *You charming Villain!* And this Interpretation, good Manners, as well as good Senſe, oblige me to put upon all the diſguis'd *Panegyrick*, of which I am the Subject; for I ſhould be the moſt uncharitable Man alive, could I imagine they were in earneſt againſt me, and really deſign'd to ſully my unſpotted Fame, who dine at leaſt three times a Week at my Expence, and who appear every Day in my Livery. They are certainly in Jeſt when they ſpeak Ill of thoſe who give them their *Bread*, as they were when they extoll'd thoſe who took it from them.

But when any thing, apparently ſerious, bears hard upon me; when an unskilful Writer, tranſgreſſes the Orders of the Party, and has really a Meaning, without being obliged to his Readers for it; when his Corrections are literal, and I feel the Laſh, I am ſo far from looking round for a Weapon of the ſame Sort, or from offering to turn upon the Aggreſſor; that I improve the good Intentions of ſuch a Friend to my own Advantage, as I ought, and with great Juſtice conclude, that I have done ſomething that Week to deſerve ſo much Anger and Reſentment, which perhaps too may not come up to the Provocation.

My Conduct in theſe Caſes is not entirely my own: I took the Hint from a very great Perſon, whoſe Example I ſhall ſet down for the benefit of others; and I believe it may ſerve to convince us, that by miſtaking a Treatment of this ſort, we rob our ſelves not only of a great deal of Eaſe, but no leſs Honour and Dignity.

A Foreign Prince, during his Reſidence amongſt us, was very ſhy of expoſing his Face to the gaze of the Vulgar. He commonly rode in a cloſe Chariot with the Windows up, and had always ſome Attendant near him, in Dreſs, Shape, and Features ſo very like him, that he went *Incog* even in Publick; after the manner of the *Oriental Monarchs*, whoſe Maxim is, *Rather to be felt than ſeen*. As he paſſed through one of our Towns in this plight, the common People, who flock'd together in great Numbers to ſee him, being diſappointed in their Expectations, and at that time not ſo well inſtructed in their Behaviour towards Crown'd Heads, aſſaulted the *Royal Itinerant* in a rude tumultuous Manner, and threw Dirt and Filth in great Quantities at his Coach; ſome of which did not ſpare even his Perſon. An *Engliſh* Gentleman of no mean Figure, who had the Care of conducting Him, try'd to appeaſe the Rabble, but in vain: At laſt he bethought him how to prevent the ill Conſequences of ſuch a Tumult; and riding up to the Prince, ſoon prevail'd upon him to ſit quiet, and take all with Patience that the Mob threw at him; by aſſuring Him, *That flinging of Dirt was an* Engliſh *Cuſtom of doing Honour to Great Men, whenever they came into that Country.*

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*** *This* PAPER *will come out every* Monday *and* Friday.

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